

Message Text

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SUBJECT: POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN MILAN AGAIN SPOTLIGHTS LAW AND
ORDER ISSUE

SUMMARY: SHOOTING OF EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY LEFTIST STUDENT
BY NEO-FASCIST EXTREMIST IN MILAN APRIL 16 PROVOKED RAMPAGE OF
FAR LEFT VIOLENCE APRIL 17 WHICH RESULTED IN ONE DEATH AND
DOZENS INJURED, SEVERAL SERIOUSLY. FAR LEFT EXTREMIST MOBS
ATTACKED FAR RIGHT MSI PARTY OFFICES
AND NEO-FASCIST HANGOUTS, THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE CENTRIST
MILAN DAILY IL GIORNALE, AND A FAR RIGHT WEEKLY (LO SPECCHIO).
IBERIA AIRLINES AND A POLICE STATION. ONE DEMONSTRATOR WAS KILLED
BY A CARABINIERI VEHICLE WHICH REPORTEDLY WENT OUT OF CONTROL.
COMING IN THE WAKE OF A TRAIN BOMBING NEAR FLORENCE APRIL 13
WHICH NARROWLY MISSED CAUSING A DERAILMENT, THE MILAN EVENTS
HAVE SPOTLIGHTED THE LAW AND ORDER ISSUE AGAIN AS THE COUNTRY
MOVES INTO A FULL BLOWN ELECTORAL CLIMATE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE SHOOTING OF A FAR LEFT STUDENT IN MILAN ON APRIL 16
BY AN EXPONENT OF THE NEO-FASCIST, EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY AVAN-
GUARDIA NAZIONALE GROUP HAS PROVOKED A MASSIVE OUTBURST OF
VIOLENCE PARTICULARLY BY EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY LEFTISTS.
FULL DETAILS OF THE SHOOTING ARE NOT YET CLEAR AND THE SUSPECTED
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CULPRIT IS STILL AT LARGE. HOWEVER, PRESS REPORTS SUGGEST

THAT THE TRAGEDY AROSE FROM A BRAWL BETWEEN RIGHT AND LEFT-WING EXTREMISTS IN WHICH THE YOUNG NEO-FASCIST FIRED AT ONE OF A GROUP OF LEFT-WING EXTREMISTS AS THEY SMASHED THE WINDOWS OF HIS SMALL CAR.

2. THE MILAN SHOOTING IMMEDIATELY PROVOKED THE ORGANIZATION OF ANTI-FASCIST DEMONSTRATIONS IN A NUMBER OF CITIES AND A ONE-HOUR NATIONWIDE STRIKE BY THE THREE MAJOR LABOR FEDERATIONS APRIL 18. THE DEMONSTRATIONS IN MILAN APRIL 17 QUICKLY GOT OUT OF HAND AS GROUPS OF EXTRA PARLIAMENTARY LEFTISTS ARMED WITH MOLOTOV COCKTAILS ATTACKED "FASCIST" TARGETS. A NUMBER OF OFFICES OF THE NEO-FASCIST MSI PARTY AND EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY RIGHTIST HANGOUTS WERE RANSACKED. THE PRINTING PLANT OF THE CENTRIST MILAN DAILY, IL GIORNALE (WHICH HAD BLAMED BOTH RIGHT AND LEFT FOR THE APRIL 16 SHOOTING), WAS BESIEGED AND WINDOWS SMASHED. A POLICE STATION AND THE IBERIA AIRLINES OFFICE WERE ALSO ATTACKED.

3. THE APRIL 17 VIOLENCE LED TO THE DEATH OF A DEMONSTRATOR RUN OVER BY A CARABINIERI VEHICLE. ACCOUNTS OF THE INCIDENT DIFFER, BUT THE OFFICIAL VERSION EXPLAINS THAT THE DRIVER WAS HIT BY A THROWN OBJECT AND LOST CONTROL OF HIS VEHICLE. AT LEAST TWO DOZEN POLICE AND A NUMBER OF DEMONSTRATORS WERE REPORTEDLY INJURED. A MSI PROVINCIAL COUNCILLOR AND A FAR-RIGHT FORMER LABOR ACTIVIST WERE SET UPON BY DEMONSTRATORS AND SERIOUSLY INJURED.

4. INTERIOR MINISTER GUI RESPONDED IN PARLIAMENT YESTERDAY TO INTERROGATIONS ON THE MILAN VIOLENCE. GUI STRONGLY CONDEMNED THE APRIL 16 KILLING OF THE FAR LEFT STUDENT AND PINNED THE BLAME SQUARELY ON FASCIST VIOLENCE. HOWEVER, GUI WENT ON TO REAFFIRM THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TO REPRESS THESE SORTS OF FASCIST VIOLENCE AS WELL AS "ANY OTHER FORM OF POLITICAL OR NON-POLITICAL VIOLENCE." GUI STATED THAT POLICE ALONE CANNOT DEAL WITH PROBLEM AND THAT OTHER STATE ORGANS (I.E., THE COURTS) MUST ACT WITH GREATER EFFICIENCY AND SPEED AGAINST PROMOTERS OF FASCIST OR "OTHER" VIOLENCE.

5. GUI WAS CRITICIZED IN PARLIAMENT FROM BOTH LEFT AND RIGHT FOR ALLEGED GOVERNMENT DERELICTION IN FAILING TO DO MORE TO

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PREVENT POLITICAL VIOLENCE. THE COMMUNISTS AND SOCIALISTS PRE-DICTABLY MAINTAINED THEIR STANCE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT DOING ENOUGH TO COMBAT FASCIST VIOLENCE AND THAT THIS VIOLENCE FORMS PART OF A FASCIST "STRATEGY TO TENSION" AIMED AT SUBVERTING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS. A NEO-FASCIST MSI PARLIAMENTARY SPOKESMAN CONDEMNED THE SHOOTING OF THE MILAN STUDENT, SAID THAT HIS PARTY HAS CONDEMNED AVANGUARDIA NAZIONALE VIOLENCE AND OPENLY ACCUSED FORMER INTERIOR MINISTER TAVIANI OF HAVING FINANCED THIS

EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP. LIBERAL PARTY REPRESENTATIVES
CRITICIZED WHAT THEY SAW AS A GOVERNMENT TENDENCY
TO MINIMIZE THE GRAVITY OF FAR-LEFT PROVOKED VIOLENCE.

6. THE MILAN INCIDENTS, WHICH MAY HAVE A RIPPLE EFFECT OVER
THE NEXT DAYS AT ANTI-FASCIST DEMONSTRATIONS ALREADY PLANNED IN MANY
CITIES, COME IN THE WAKE OF A POTENTIALLY DISASTEROUS TRAIN
BOMBING THE NIGHT OF APRIL 12-13. A BOMB WHICH EXPLODED ON THE
MAIN NORTH-SOUTH RAIL LINE NEAR FLORENCE AS A PASSENGER EXPRESS
TRAIN PASSED OVER, NARROWLY MISSED CAUSING A DERAILMENT WHICH
COULD HAVE BEEN DISASTROUS. PREVIOUS TRAIN BOMBINGS IN THE AREA
HAVE GENERALLY BEEN THOUGHT TO BE THE WORK OF NEO-FASCIST
ELEMENTS. THE WATERS HAVE BEEN MUDDIED, HOWEVER, BY A LETTER
ALLEGEDLY COMING FROM A FAR LEFT GROUP, THE ARMED PROLETARIAN
NUCLEI (NAP), CLAIMING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BLAST. ARREST
WARRANTS FOR TEN NAP ACTIVISTS HAVE JUST BEEN ISSUED IN CONNECTION
WITH THE GROUP'S ACTIVITIES IN NAPLES (ROME 4469) ON CHARGES
OF SUBVERSIVE ASSOCIATION AND KIDNAPPING (TO RAISE MONEY FOR
THEIR ACTIVITIES).

7. COMMENT: THE MILAN INCIDENTS ARE SYMPTOMATIC OF THE
INCREASING TENDENCY OF THE POLITICAL EXTREMES HERE TO RESORT
TO VIOLENCE. THEY WILL CERTAINLY ALSO REINFORCE THE ALREADY
CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC CONCERN OVER THE LAW AND ORDER QUESTION
-- AN ISSUE WHICH MANY (INCLUDING THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY
LEADERSHIP) PERCEIVE AS THE TOP ISSUE IN THE DEVELOPING
REGIONAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN. THE DEBATE ON PINNING THE BLAME FOR
POLITICAL VIOLENCE WILL NO DOUBT ALSO BE STIMULATED BY THESE
LATEST EVENTS. THE WILD MEN ON THE EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY RIGHT
WHO SEE POLITICAL VIOLENCE AS A MEANS OF INCREASING TENSION
AND THEREBY FACILITATING OR PROVOKING A RIGHTIST COUP WILL
CONTINUE PROPERLY TO BE REGARDED AS A PRINCIPLE THREAT TO
DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS. HOWEVER, THE CAPACITY AND WILLINGNESS
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OF THE EXTREME LEFT TO RESORT TO "JUST" VIOLENCE TO INTIMIDATE
OR "PUNISH" ITS OPPONENTS IS HIGHLY VISIBLE AND SHOULD NOT
BE UNDERESTIMATED AS A FACTOR ALSO CAPABLE OF ERODING ITALY'S
DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS. BEAUDRY

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